Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of LAWS—eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF; shoreless universal essence.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

THEOSOPHY

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OPINION, REASON, INTUITION

THEOSOPHY is often spoken of as a "teaching," which it is, if teaching be understood as message-bearing communication, written or repeated in speech. Yet students of Theosophy are well aware of the difference between any teaching and the knowledge with which the teaching is concerned. There is, we sense, Truth, and there are ideas about the truth, and these ideas, while indispensable avenues of approach, must never be mistaken for the reality they seek to suggest.

There seems an ambiguity here, since, quite evidently, one begins the understanding of Theosophy by studying its "teachings." Is not Theosophy, then, those "teachings"? In a familiar manner of speaking, Theosophy is indeed the recorded teachings, yet we know that in every inquirer, before he opens a Theosophical book or hears a lecture, some inner motion of the spirit has stirred that one to become an inquirer. There was in him the arousal of some core of knowledge, and the awakening of a desire to increase it.

It is difficult for us to say just what we know, or how we know it. The world of sense lays major claim on our sense or feeling about "reality." The spontaneous identification of whatever is external as real leads to certain habits of mind, making us expectant that all reality will be garbed in the same convincing objectivity. Consider the difficulty experienced in thinking about the self. Simple recognition that the self is the one who does the thinking—who is *aware*—is not felt to be satisfactory. The self seems elusive. It does not submit to being thought "about." It is as though we seek,

not realization of the self, but a "print" or image of it that we can examine more closely, looking to see some structure or "parts." The sheer, initial reality of *being* a perceiving center of consciousness escapes us for the reason that we habitually rely on external kinds of knowledge. Yet there can be no external knowledge of the self.

There are of course many reflections of the self—images of man embodied in his actions—and these are commonly assumed to be objects of self-knowledge. So it is, also, with ordinary knowledge or teaching. The reflections of understanding—its applications—are accounted knowledge by the world, and in this common estimate of what is in books, in beliefs, in widely accepted facts, we may recognize the source of our feeling that Theosophy is ambiguously defined. Early in the course of the Theosophical Movement Madame Blavatsky made plain what *she* meant by Theosophy, in her articles, "What Is Theosophy?" and "What Are the Theosophists?" which appeared in the first issue of the *Theosophist* (November, 1879). Having written at some length of ancient teachings, she said in the latter article:

> With how much, then, of this nature-searching, God-seeking science of the ancient Aryan and Greek mystics, and of the powers of modern spiritual mediumship, does the Society agree? Our answer is: with it all. But if asked what it believes in, the reply will be: *"As a body*—Nothing." The Society, as a body, has no creed, as creeds are but the shells around spiritual knowledge; and Theosophy in its fruition is spiritual knowledge itself —the very essence of philosophical and theistic enquiry.

A little later, she wrote:

> Those books, which contain the most self-evident truth, are to it [Theosophy] inspired (not revealed). But all books it regards, on account of the human element contained in them, as inferior to the Book of Nature; to read which and comprehend it correctly, the innate powers of the soul must be highly developed. Ideal laws can be perceived by the intuitive faculty alone; they are beyond the domain of argument and dialectics, and no one can understand or rightly appreciate them through the explanations of another mind, even though this mind be claiming a direct revelation.

What, then, are the uses of books? They are various and necessary, as H.P.B. explains in "Is Theosophy a Religion?" From the Theosophical books we gain acquaintance with the Teaching, of which she says:

> Its doctrines, if seriously studied, call forth, by stimulating one's reasoning powers and awakening the *inner* in the animal man, every hitherto dormant power for good in us, and also the perception of the true and the real, as opposed to the false and the unreal. Tearing off with no uncertain hand the thick veil of dead-letter with which very old religious scriptures were cloaked, scientific Theosophy, learned in the cunning symbolism of the ages, reveals to the scoffer at old wisdom the origin of the world's faiths and sciences. It opens new vistas beyond the old horizons of crystallized, motionless and despotic faiths; and turning blind belief into a reasoned knowledge founded on mathematical laws—the only *exact* science—it demonstrates to him under profounder and more philosophical aspects the existence of that which, repelled by the grossness of its dead-letter form, he had long since abandoned as a nursery tale.

Belief, she says, is to be converted into reasoned knowledge, and we have help in this from study of the teachings which are found in books.

Yet reason alone is often spoken of in unflattering terms in Theosophy. For example, in *Isis Unveiled* H.P.B. remarks: "Reason is the clumsy weapon of the scientists—intuition the unerring guide of the seer." (I, 433.) On the next page, after quoting Hippocrates on the wonder of instinct, she says:

> Instantaneous and unerring cognition of an omniscient mind, instinct is in everything unlike the finite reason; and in the tentative progress of the latter, the god-like nature of man is often utterly engulfed, whenever he shuts out from himself the divine light of intuition. The one crawls, the other flies; reason is the power of the man, intuition the prescience of the woman!
>
> Plotinus, the pupil of the great Ammonius Saccas, the chief founder of the Neo-platonic school, taught that human knowledge had three ascending steps: opinion, science, and *illumination.* He explained it by saying that "the means or instrument of opinion is sense, or perception; of science, dialectics; of illumination, *intuition* (or divine instinct). To the last, *reason is subordinate;* it is absolute knowledge founded on the identification of the mind with the object known."

These stages in the formation of knowledge are not difficult to identify in our own experience. Opinions are founded on sense—what we see or hear—without critical examination. It was for long ages the common opinion that the sun moves across the sky in a diurnal rotation around the earth. It remained for Copernicus, using reason, to point out that the reality is different from the appearance. With mathematics—the purest form of reasoning—he

showed that opinions based on sense perceptions can be seriously misleading. Obviously, science is better than opinion. But science, too, as a form of reason, has its limitations. In a brief statement which has since gained many counterparts in the present-day criticism of technology, H.P.B. gives unaided reason this characterization:

> Reason—the pride of man—fails to check the propensities of his matter, and brooks no restraint upon the unlimited gratification of his senses. Far from leading him to be his *own* physician, its subtle sophistries lead him too often to his own destruction.

This is what such writers as Roderick Seidenberg, Lewis Mumford, and Theodore Roszak have been saying, again and again, in recent years. Reason, as we have been applying it in science and technology, has no principle of control or self-limitation. Its logic is only technical.

What then is the good of reason? If reason is so inferior in one way to instinct, and in another to intuition, why should we try to be "reasonable" at all?

Reason, we are told, is the outgrowth of the physical brain. Yet the brain (along with the heart) is the organ of a power higher than the personality, and the brain, Mr. Judge says, is "the exhaustless generator of force and form." It is also the instrument which needs to be "made porous to the soul's recollections." From the egoic point of view, knowing is remembering—which is to say that refinement of the material instrument will eventually make possible the full incarnation of the Manasic being. As H.P.B. explained in her article, "Genius":

> That which makes one mortal a great man and of another a vulgar, silly person is, as said, the quality and make-up of the physical shell or casing, and the adequacy or inadequacy of brain and body to transmit and give expression to the light of the real, *Inner* man; and this aptness or inaptness is, in its turn, the result of Karma. Or, to use another simile, physical man is the musical instrument, and the Ego, the performing artist. The potentiality of perfect melody of sound, is in the former—the instrument—and no skill of the latter can awaken a faultless harmony out of a broken or badly made instrument. This harmony depends on the fidelity of transmission, by word or act, to the objective plane, of the unspoken divine thought in the very depths of man's subjective or inner nature.

Since thought is the constructive power in man, and since all that he is, in his manifested existence, is the result of thought, we

may think of the right use of reason as that process by which matter—the "whole mass of matter," as Mr. Judge puts it—is raised to man's estate. Thinking is indeed the alchemical process which lifts the very atoms to a higher level of existence and relationships. And, again, it is through contact with matter that Egos become able to achieve independent, self-conscious existence on this plane, and then to go on to higher degrees of development.

Our difficulty with the idea of reason comes from the duality of the mind-principle, or *Manas*. On this subject, Mr. Judge says in *The Ocean of Theosophy:*

> Manas, or the Thinker, is the reincarnating being, the immortal who carries the results and values of all the different lives lived on earth or elsewhere. Its nature becomes dual as soon as it is attached to a body. For the human brain is a superior organism and *Manas* uses it to reason from premises to conclusions. This also differentiates man from animal, for the animal acts from automatic and so-called instinctual impulses, whereas the man can use reason. This is the lower aspect of the Thinker or *Manas,* and not, as some have supposed, the highest and best gift belonging to man. Its other, and in Theosophy higher, aspect is the intuitional, which knows, and does not depend on reason. The lower, and purely intellectual, is nearest to the principle of Desire, and is thus distinguished from its other side which has affinity for the spiritual principles above. If the Thinker, then, becomes wholly intellectual, the entire nature begins to tend downward; for intellect alone is cold, heartless, selfish, because it is not lighted up by the two other principles of *Buddhi* and *Atma.*

Yet there is a kind of thinking, an intellection or "reasoning," which *is* lighted by the higher principles. If we reflect, we soon see that thought or reasoning moves to no purpose unless its activity is empowered by feeling. Feeling gives the motive for action, and thought without feeling lacks effect. After, by thinking, we reach a conclusion, the time comes to act upon it, and then feeling provides the conviction, the energy of action. This feeling may be either higher or lower, depending upon the affinities of the mind.

If we take science or reason in the sense given it by Plotinus—in his specification of the three stages of knowledge, Opinion, Science, and Illumination—using the term as he meant it, science is the equivalent of Dialectic. What is the Dialectic?

The term is Plato's, and we find a helpful explanation of its meaning in Robert E. Cushman's *Therapeia* (Chapel Hill, 1958), a volume devoted to Plato's philosophy. In a short introductory

chapter Prof. Cushman says that while Plato greatly distrusted writing, in contrast to the vital energy of the spoken word, he wrote at length in order to reach a larger audience, employing dialogue as the provocative of thought:

> Plato wrote only dialogues, and his results commonly annoy readers easily exasperated by tentative and provisional conclusions or, seemingly, no conclusions at all. Often Plato appears to be wholly absorbed in the quest and indifferent to the outcome; yet he is fully convinced that the dialogue alone preserves, in some measure, the form of "living speech" in search of truth and is alone, therefore, suited to be the vehicle of dialectic. Dialectic, especially in the form of *elenchos* or cross-examination, is the art of inquiry rather than of demonstration. It is a method calculated not so much to enforce a thesis as to discover one. It does not derive consequences from postulates; its business is to authenticate postulates. Through its power of crystallization, a man formulates the real issues and asks the fertile questions which may lead of themselves to self-confirming answers. For we cannot comprehend what Plato means to accomplish unless we understand that, in the proper sphere of its operation. Plato discounts all answers except those a man gives to himself, inwardly consenting to the import of the converging lines of evidence. . . . in metaphysics, a judgment is worth nothing if it is not one's own. If it is, it is a conviction and a commitment. It is, even more profoundly, an agreement of mind with itself and with ideal being.
>
> Philosophy, whose best helper is dialectic, is not in Plato's view—and contrary to Aristotle's occasional indication—simply knowledge of the truth. On the contrary, for Plato philosophy is a way and a life, a way to a moment of existence in which there is direct confrontation with reality.

This does much to help us understand what Plotinus meant by "science" and the dialectical use of reason. Quite evidently, intuition plays a part in such a reasoning process. Reasoning, in this sense, does not create or manufacture the "truth," but displays alternatives, gathers rival considerations, orders possibilities, so that our minds have opportunity to review the field and to cleave to what is intuitively sanctioned as the real. Reason brings impersonality into play for the personal man. It is dispassion girded by a love of truth. Its higher processes enjoy the illumination of the higher mind, through which, by means of its root in the spiritual nature, there is access to the soul's vision. "The higher part of the mind," says H.P.B., "is connected with the spiritual soul or Buddhi." Those who think with these higher faculties, she continues, "will think even upon ordinary matters on that *higher* plane."

> Whatever such a person may think about, his thought will be so far more intense than the thought of an ordinary person, that by this very intensity it obtains the power of creation. Science has established the fact that thought is an energy. This energy in its action disturbs the atoms of the astral atmosphere around us. . . . the rays of thought have the same potentiality for producing forms in the astral atmosphere as the sunrays have with regard to a lens. Every thought so evolved with energy from the brain, creates *nolens volens* a shape. ("Dialogues Between the Two Editors.")

It is of course easy to find illustrations of this use of reason in the writing of H.P.B. herself. And there are those distinguished writers on whom she drew for an exposition of Theosophic conceptions. Many of the poets thought in this way, using reason with an "inspiration of their own." It is a faculty which "can be developed, but only with great difficulty, a firm determination, and through much self-sacrifice."

The Lotus Symbol

The Lotus, or Padma, is a very ancient and favourite simile for the Kosmos itself, and also for man. The popular reasons given are, firstly, the fact just mentioned, that the Lotus-seed contains within itself a perfect miniature of the future plant, which typifies the fact that the spiritual prototypes of all things exist in the immaterial world before those things become materialised on Earth. Secondly, the fact that the Lotus plant grows up through the water, having its root in the Ilus, or mud, and spreading its flower in the air above. The Lotus thus typifies the life of man and also that of the Kosmos; for the Secret Doctrine teaches that the elements of both are the same, and that both are developing in the same direction. The root of the Lotus sunk in the mud represents material life, the stalk passing up through the water typifies existence in the astral world, and the flower floating on the water and opening to the sky is emblematical of spiritual being.

—*The Secret Doctrine* I, 57-8

THREADS OF OCCULT SCIENCE

VIII

[Soon after starting the *Theosophist* in India, H.P.B. expressed her intention to maintain a nonsectarian spirit in its pages. This was an oft-repeated theme as the journal progressed, bearing out her view that the Truth would suffocate in any other environment. The present collation of her notes emphasizes this conviction. References are given by volume and page number. Eds.]

THE Theosophists *not* having as yet studied all these Bhasyas [scholarly commentaries mentioned by a contributor] have no intention to uphold any particular sectarian school. They leave this to the pandits, for whose especial benefit, among others, this journal was founded. A great American quarterly—the *North American Review*—adopts the plan of submitting some famous contributor's manuscript to one or more equally famous writers of very antagonistic views, and then printing all of the criticisms together. By this wise device, the reader of the magazine is able to see what can be said of a given subject from every point of view. We will do likewise . . . [Vol. I, 88].

We hold *no views at all* on anything "beyond mortal ken." Claiming the possession of our full senses, we can neither prove nor disprove that which is *beyond* the knowledge of mortal man, leaving all speculations and theories thereon to emotional enthusiasts endowed with *blind faith* that creates self-delusion and hallucinations [Vol. IV, 186].

In our humble opinion, since there cannot be but one and only Truth, the thousand and one interpretations by different sectarians of the same and one thing are simply the outward and evanescent appearances or aspects of that which is too dazzling (or perchance too dark and too profound) for mortal eye to correctly distinguish and describe. As already remarked by us in *Isis Unveiled* the multitudinous creeds and faiths have all been derived from one primitive source. TRUTH standing as the one white ray of light, it is decomposed by the prism into various and eye-deceiving colours of the solar spectrum. Combined, the aggregate of all those endless human interpretations—shoots and offshoots—represent one eternal truth; separate, they are but shades of human error and the

signs of human blindness and imperfection. However, all such publications are useful, since they fill the arena of discussion with new combatants and that truth can be reached at but after the explosion of innumerable errors [Vol. IV, 197].

A "Perfect Spirit" is an abstraction, a *non*-being, and can have no *gunas* or attributes which alone make up the entity. Science has no "knowledge," we beg leave to state, of an "intelligent Being," a "Spirit"—not modern science at any rate. And the science of metaphysics rejects entirely the possibility of the Infinite having any conscious relation whatsoever with the finite. Moreover "Perfect Spirit" and "Eternal Principle" are synonyms and identical. . . . [Vol. IV, 274].

Few have identical beliefs, and every religionist of whatever faith is firmly impressed with the truth and superiority of his own creed, with no regard whatever for the truths possibly contained in that of his brother—the result is, that sectarianism is kept ever alive, with no chance in it for mutual toleration—least of all, feelings of Brotherhood [Vol. IV, 274]. Each of them believes in whatever he likes, and there is no one to interfere with his private beliefs. The Theosophical Society is no school of sectarianism and holds to no special dogmas. . . . [Vol. V, 29].

When challenged to give out our views, we do so, adding every time that they are our own *personal views*: and as such—since we do not believe ourselves infallible—are not to be taken as final truths. Instead of preaching our own religion, we implore every one to first study his own and remain in it, whatever it is. Besides which, theosophy is compatible with every religion, the world over. There were thaumaturgists in every creed, and mysticism has as much room in idolatrous as in monotheistic systems. Theosophy is the culmination and the practical demonstration of the *truths* underlying every creed. It requires but sincerity and a firm will in the application to the Essentials of any of them—whether they be Theism or Adwaitism or even Atheism. Theosophy is simply the informing life of creed and of every religion and goes to prove their *raison d'etre,* instead of their negation [Vol. IV, 274].

The inaugural addresses of the respective presiding officers of the Ionian and Bombay Branches of the Theosophical Society, so well illustrate its policy of mutual tolerance and confraternity. Here we see the Italian thinker moved by the same lofty aspirations for individual perfection and the happiness and enlightenment of man-

kind, as the Parsi thinker of Bombay. And though the one conceives of the First Cause, or Deity, quite differently from the other, whose ancestors from time immemorial have worshipped the Sun as a visible type of Hormazd, yet a common religious feeling moves the heart of each, and a common instinct makes him see the way upward towards the truth brighter and clearer by the light of Theosophy. Ours is not an atheistical society, though it does contain atheists; nor is it a Christian one, even though our brother Dr. Wyld, President of the British Theosophical Society, would have us accept Jesus as the most divine personage that ever appeared among men. Our Fellows are of the most varied opinions; and each has a right to claim respect for his ideas as he is bound to respect those of his brothers. We have presidents who are severally Christian, Deist, Buddhist, Hindu and Atheist; none dogmatizers, none claiming to be wiser or more infallible than the other, yet each taking the other by the hand, calling him brother, and helping him and being helped in the divine quest after knowledge. Nor are all, or even a large minority, students of occult sciences, for rarely is the true mystic born. Few, alas! have they ever been, who so yearned after the discovery of Nature's secrets as to be willing to pursue that hard and unselfish course of study: and our own century can show fewer than any of its predecessors. As to the secrets of the Theosophical Society, when we mention the masonic-like signs of recognition, and the privacy secured for the handful who do make their experiments in psychological science, all has been said. The Parent Society is, in one word, a Republic of Conscience, a brotherhood of men in search of the Absolute Truth. As was sufficiently explained in our opening October number, every one of us professes to be ready to help the other, whatever the branch of science or religion to which his personal predilections may lead him [Vol. I, 298].

The Theosophical Society requires no oaths, as it deems no pledge more binding than the word of honour [Vol. I, 35].

WHAT IS A STUDENT?

IN the *Key to Theosophy,* H. P. Blavatsky's answer to a query about how the third object of the Society is to be implemented provides a basis for considering this question. She says in part:

> Our duty is to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions. To oppose and counteract—after due investigation and proof of its irrational nature—bigotry in every form, religious, scientific, or social, and *cant* above all, whether as religious sectarianism or as belief in miracles or anything supernatural. What we have to do is to seek to obtain *knowledge* of all the laws of nature, and to diffuse it. To encourage the study of those laws least understood by modern people, the so-called Occult Sciences, *based on the true knowledge of nature,* instead of, as at present, on *superstitious beliefs based on blind faith and authority.*

She goes on to say that popular folklore and traditions are the repository of long-lost but important secrets of nature, which may be understood by careful examination. Taken as a whole, her statement suggests that wide acquaintance with Theosophical doctrines and cultivation of careful habits of study are the means by which a larger objective is reached. This objective is to search out and strengthen, through study and application to daily life, the universal truths about the spiritual aspect of man and nature which may be made evident in the life we can see. It points to the necessity for discriminating between knowledge of life as a whole and that of only some of its parts. In this endeavor, the individual makes himself a laboratory in which external and internal events are encountered and studied.

Keeping alive in man his spiritual intuitions requires both an open mind and the exercise of discrimination. This means that everything that crosses the student's path is a proper subject for inquiry. There is a need to interpret all the facts of experience and at the same time for judgment concerning their relevance. But what basis for interpretation is not flawed by the relativities of partial perception? What criterion can do justice to every man and idea, every religion and system of thought, without yielding to a fuzzy tolerance of error? Mr. Crosbie's statement about the know-

ledge each man acquires for himself seems to shed light on this question:

> Truth is not a man, nor a book, nor a statement. The Nature of Truth is *universal;* its possessors in any degree will be found to be appliers of universality in thought, speech and action. Their effort will be for humanity regardless of sex, creed, caste or color. They will never be found among those claiming to be the chosen spokesman of the Deity—and exacting homage from their fellow-men: true Brotherhood includes the least developed as well as the very highest. We must seek to give aid to *all* in search of truth. Our value and aid in this great work will be just what we make them by our motive, our judgment, our conduct.

This locates the basis of discrimination within each man, or rather, within his consciousness of himself as not essentially separate from other beings. Tolstoy, quoted at length by H.P.B. in "The Science of Life," shows that man's life, considered as a part of nature, gravitates like a pendulum between two poles; concern for himself as a unit apparently separate from all the rest of life, and awareness that life consists of other beings who have the same claim on his concern as he—that they, too, exist. Life, he says, is not only being alive, but being conscious of it. He goes on to infer from this that, in addition to the consciousness of life itself, there is in man a still higher consciousness—which, though virtually indescribable, has undeniable presence. He says:

> When I speak of life, know that the idea of it is indissolubly connected in my conceptions with that of *conscious* life. No other life is known to me except conscious life, nor can it be known to anyone else.
>
> We call life, the life of animals, organic life. But this is no life at all, only a certain state or condition of life manifesting to us.
>
> But what is this consciousness or mind, the exigencies of which exclude personality and transfer the energy of man outside of him and into that state which is conceived by us as the blissful state of love?
>
> What is conscious mind? Whatsoever we may be defining, we have to define it with our conscious mind. Therefore, with what shall we define mind? . . .
>
> If we have to define all with our mind, it follows that conscious mind cannot be defined. Yet all of us, we not only know it, but it is the only thing which is given to us to know undeniably. . . .
>
> It is the same law as the law of life, of everything organic, animal or vegetable, with that one difference that we *see* the

consummation of an intelligent law in the life of a plant. But the law of conscious mind, to which we are subjected, as the tree is subjected to its law, we *see* it not, but fulfill it. . . .

We have settled that life is that which is not our life. It is herein that lies hidden the root of error. Instead of studying that life of which we are conscious within ourselves, absolutely and exclusively—since we can know of nothing else—in order to study it, we observe that which is devoid of the most important factor and faculty of our life, namely, intelligent consciousness. By so doing, we act as a man who attempts to study an object by its shadow or reflection does.

It is this order of consciousness, ever-present if not fully incarnated, that avoids bigotry of any kind. The laws of spiritual existence, both within and beyond matter, yield their light to those for whom impartiality means both the hunger to know and the will to do justice to all.

The student who sees more in the acquisition of knowledge than the assurance that, "whatever is, is right," learns to take the position that he is both Arjuna and Krishna, both learner and knower. Then, for him, all experience becomes the avenue for the acquirement of that divine knowledge, the attainment of which by one, makes it the more accessible to all.

Desire and Will

In ordinary life the will is not man's servant, but, being then guided solely by desire, it makes man a slave to his desires. . . . The system of Patanjali postulates that *Ishwara,* the spirit in man, is untouched by any troubles, works, fruits of works, or desires, and when a firm position is assumed with the end in view of reaching union with spirit through concentration, he comes to the aid of the lower self and raises it gradually to higher planes. In this process the Will by degrees is given a stronger and stronger tendency to act upon a different line from that indicated by passion and desire. Thus it is freed from the domination of desire and at last subdues the mind itself. But before the perfection of the practice is arrived at the will still acts according to desire, only that the desire is for higher things and away from those of the material life.

—W. Q. J.

letters • questions • comment

It is stated that after death the baser thoughts and feelings generated during life separate from the nobler ones, the former becoming the Kamarupa, and eventually the skandhas of a future life, the latter forming the devachanic vesture, their essence being assimilated to the reincarnating ego. But the thoughts or actions of most men are neither wholly good nor bad; the good may be mixed with passionate resentment at flagrant injustices, the evil impulse tempered by the influence of a moral code. How can these energies, so closely linked in life, be separated after death?

Conceivably, the association of these widely differing moral energies or qualities is more in need of explanation than their separation. How, we might ask, can such polar tendencies be so intimately mixed? We understand good and evil with some clarity when they are by themselves, but we find their blending in human nature especially bewildering. As the questioner suggests, men often do wrong in the name of good; their best impulses may justify stubborn mistakes and injustices, by reason of the web of false ideas through which moral intentions must make their way.

Good has affinity with good, evil with evil, and when the strange focus we call human nature is relaxed at death, the good rises to unite with the good, by what might be termed a natural dirigibility, and the gross and base seeks its natural level, in the close association we call the Kama Rupa. During life the lower principles are held under some sort of control by the Ego; after death there is radical change. H.P.B. speaks of this in *Transactions* (pp. 75-76):

> The lower principles are like wild beasts, and the higher Manas is the rational man who tames or subdues them more or less successfully. But once the animal gets free from the master who held it in subjection; no sooner has it ceased to hear his voice and see him than it starts off again to the jungle and its ancient den. It takes, however, some time for an animal to return to its original and natural state, but these lower principles or "spook" return instantly, and no sooner has the higher Triad entered the Devachanic state than the lower Duad rebecomes that which it was from the beginning, a principle endued with purely animal instincts, made happier still by the great change.

The question calls for reflection on what human nature and embodied self-consciousness are. The personality is a laboratory, a workshop, for the transformation of the finite into the infinite. Both good and evil, therefore, make the stuff of the vortex of human nature. They are joined for the purposes of egoic decision as the field of human growth. The mind, says H.P.B., "when placed under the influence or control of material conditions," manifests certain capacities, one of which is the power of "connecting our ideas together by the mysterious link of memory, and thus generating the notion of self or individuality." (*S.D.* I, 292.) This "notion of the self" is the foundation of the personality and is constituted of the mix we call human nature. H.P.B. gives an account of the difference between the real Ego and this "empirical self" in the *Key*:

> You see, Mr. Smith really means a long series of daily experiences strung together by the thread of memory, and forming what Mr. Smith calls "himself." But none of these "experiences" are really the "I" or the Ego, nor do they give "Mr. Smith" the feeling that he is himself, for he forgets the greater part of his daily experiences, and they produce the feeling of *Egoity* in him only while they last. We Theosophists, therefore, distinguish between this bundle of "experiences," which we call the *false* (because so finite and evanescent) *personality*, and that element in man to which the feeling of "I am I" is due. It is this "I am I" which we call the *true* individuality; and we say that this "Ego" or individuality plays, like an actor, many parts on the stage of life.

The mix of good and evil spoken of by the questioner is indeed this "false personality." At death it is separated by natural law into its constituents, each finding its own level and association. Only an incarnated Prometheus, a Manasic soul, can fuse them for the purposes of refinement and transmutation. The world of embodied existence is the place where this work is carried on.

It seems reasonable that some energies, to the extent that they are homogeneous with the moral quality of the reincarnating Ego, should be assimilated by it; while those partaking of the qualities of matter would as naturally cling together, exhausting their force when the bodily stimulation to which they owe their being is gone, to be revivified again by the Karmic attraction of another lifetime. The higher energies, generated by thought, will and feeling directed toward the benefit of other beings, have a continuity, by virtue of their unifying character. They eventually become part of the conscious knowledge of the ego. Thus it might be said that man's

thoughts and feelings separate as naturally and inevitably after death as his principles themselves, when the Ego is no longer holding them together.

What is really at issue is the growth of the reincarnating Ego as a spiritual being. Insofar as this can be defined, it might be described as that condition of consciousness which does not exclude any form of life. The Ego creates for itself the conditions under which it functions on any plane. During life those conditions require a conscious effort to distinguish the permanent from the impermanent. Through its alliance with the opaque qualities of matter, the soul creates obstacles to clear perception, and then through effort to realize its divinity it refines that opacity into clarity of vision.

In her article "Dialogue on the Mysteries of the After-Life," H.P.B. shows that man evolves for himself the principles of his nature to provide the conditions for his growth:

> In Occultism, every qualificative change in the state of our consciousness gives to man a new aspect, and if it prevails and becomes part of the living and acting Ego, it must be (and is) given a special name, to distinguish the man in that particular state from the man he is when he places himself in another state.

THE INCARNATION OF MANAS

There is an essential opposition between matter and spirit, yet the world of sense has sprung from the world of spirit. The highest power produced one below it, and so on in a downward course, in which multiplicity and evil increase, the further in the scale beings are removed from the great First Cause. . . . Now this descent on the part of the soul is voluntary, just as in Plato it is the souls which are weighted by the corporeal that are dragged down again into the visible world. It is the soul which seeks the body. Nature indeed binds the body to the soul, but the soul binds herself to the body. Nature therefore liberates the body from the soul, but the soul liberates herself from the body.

—PORPHYRY

EVERYDAY OCCULTISM

WHAT is Occultism, or Yoga? There are as many definitions as there are men—which shows that every man is an Occultist of a sort, incessantly engaged in employing whatever of knowledge and power may be his, in the pursuit of some definite object, or series of objects. Each finds himself aided or opposed by others who have similar or alien purposes.

So Occultism, in a practical sense, is not only our place and share in the "struggle for existence," but the place and share of all the other Beings in nature. With all of these we are constantly changing places in every sense, putting ourselves, or being put, in the place of others, with or without our concurrence. Nature, as we contact nature, and ourselves, as nature contacts us, are continually at odds. There is not merely the struggle for existence, but its perpetually varying fortunes—proof positive that our knowledge and powers, our occultism, "is not sufficient," in the words of King *Duryodhana*. Yet, like him, the mass of men go on fighting just the same, blind slaves of the blind impulse to action, without ever really asking themselves why or wherefore. This is the Yoga of instinct, of impulse, of habit, of circumstance, which governs not only the Kingdoms of nature below man, but the great majority of Mankind itself. Wherever met it is really *passive* Yoga, for the "impulse to action" does not proceed from the Individual will and choice, but from unreasoning obedience to the race mind and ideas. Duryodhana, be it noted, though a King, none the less had his "preceptor," the same as *Arjuna,* whom he addressed by the same term which Arjuna used with *Krishna,* that is, MASTER.

Being a "King," Duryodhana had his army of followers of every grade of discipline and intelligence, all armed with the same or similar weapons as Arjuna's army. Nevertheless, Duryodhana frankly declares to his preceptor that while his own forces are "insufficient," those of Arjuna are "sufficient"—and yet is "resolved to fight." What may be the meaning intended by this symbolic anomaly?

NOTE—This article is from a series of essays on the *Bhagavad-Gita* first printed in Volume 15 of THEOSOPHY.

Studying the poem as a picture of human nature, just as "true to life" now as then, Duryodhana, his army, their weapons, his preceptor, represent the leaders of mankind, mankind in the mass, their actual knowledge and powers, and their inherited and acquired *basis* of action—the race mind as typified in our religion, science, and philosophy, the "preceptor" of us all.

Arjuna was just as much a human being as Duryodhana, and his followers were, like Duryodhana's—*followers,* not to be distinguished one from the other except in leadership and uniform.

The picture shows Duryodhana determined to go on fighting with insufficient forces, and Arjuna resolved *not* to fight even with sufficient forces to achieve his declared object—another paradox. As "practical Occultism" there is nothing to choose between the Yoga of Arjuna and the Yoga of Duryodhana, which is to say, between what in our day we call religion and science, or Superstition and Materialism. These are the only forms of occultism we know: if we rely on them as our basis of action we too will find them "insufficient" in the crucial hour.

Arjuna's place in evolution is distinctly in advance of Durodhana's, but it is a purely negative gain. He has found out that the so-called "objects of existence" are not worth fighting for; so his heart fails him. In this moral breakdown his Will is paralyzed, and he finds himself in that "fearful abyss" which the unknown author of *Light on the Path* calls "the abyss of nothingness," and which, he says, has to be crossed in two steps—both steps "negative"; that is to say, "they imply retreat from a present condition of things rather than advance towards another."

This "first step," says the same author, has been taken by many men, and has been pictured by many novelists, but—"No novelist has followed to the second trial, *though some of the poets have.*" This may give a hint as to why the *Gita* is cast in poetic form; as to the hold poetry has ever had on the noblest minds; as to the rarity of great poets in all ages; as to the dearth of poets and poet-lovers in our times. Poetry and music deal with Rhythm—with *both* discord and concord, making of these antithetical elements Harmony—the *Song* of Life.

Many a man has had his heart broken by the "loss of all"—the perception of the worthlessness of human life itself, not just the loss of treasured possessions which he might hope to regain or replace. And what then? Our novelists have pictured it over and over again:

the man "gives up" in one fashion or another, as Arjuna proposed to do. Some commit physical suicide, some mental, some moral. The intellect sees the Truth regarding human life, and the sight kills—not merely stupefies or lulls—the whole energetic basis, the whole incentive to action which makes *human* "life worth while." If the man does not succumb to the reactionary impulse of self-destruction he is just as apt to fall victim to its opposite, *Quietism* —"that utter paralysis of the Soul," as one of the Mahatmas characterized it. One has but to look about to see the numbers of these "living dead," veritable walking Shades of once-living Duryodhanas and Arjunas. No more than the spectral visitants of the séance-room have these poor materialized ghosts any capacity for self-energization. They are but pushed and pulled hither and yon by the attractive and repellent forces active in men with convictions —whatever those convictions may be. The Pioneers of thought in every field, but particularly in the religious one, of necessity galvanize these psychic vampires and corpses, embodied as well as disembodied.

Arjuna had come in the course of his evolution to the point of this "separation of the Principles" while still in the midst of human life and action—the point reached by ordinary men only at the time of death, or exit from human life. He *had* to go on living, with no reason for living. He had, therefore, to fall back to a basis of existence which would be *sub*-normal, or adopt a *super*-normal basis—and it is this latter which Krishna offered him. In other words, Arjuna had reached the parting of the ways in the psychic nature: he was doomed to mediumship, or—he had to *choose* Chelaship. Neither of these is normal to human life, but abnormal in racial evolution. All normal human beings experience those alternating influences which we typify as good and evil, success and failure, but normally succumb to neither. The medium pure and simple is one who has succumbed to psychic influences, whatever name be given to them; the Chela is one who sets out to understand and master the forces which govern human life—to "forever burst the *bonds* of Karma and rise above them."

Krishna at no point in the poem argues with Arjuna, or even reasons with him. Throughout, Arjuna has to do his own reasoning, reach his own conclusions, make his own choice—an example in the Occultism of teaching which theosophists themselves might profit by; a lesson in the meaning of Chelaship which the Arjunas of today need still to learn.

What Krishna does is to provide another set of reasons altogether from those which have hitherto actuated Arjuna's conduct, whether in struggling or in deciding "not to fight." Krishna has noted, if we have not, that Arjuna is not complaining of the wrong-doing of others, does not resent "circumstances," but is willing, all too willing, to accept his "fate" without repining, and is ready to listen, for he "sat down in the chariot between the two armies," a passive recipient of whatever might befall.

The first direct action of Krishna is to provide another basis for action and to test out the strength of Arjuna's negative decision. This runs all through the second and third Chapters. Throughout, the two chapters are marked by irony—not that "irony of circumstances" by which Arjuna found himself mocked and disillusioned, nor yet by the sarcasm and derision which we associate with that term, because that is our occultism in its employment. No, Krishna's irony is that gentle dissolving and refining process sometimes called "Socratic irony" because it was the favored prescription of the great Athenian in purging from the mind of his disciples the infection of prevailing ideas of life and duty. Irony *never* means what it says, but always more, or less, than is said. In this respect Krishna, like every other Great Teacher, is an arch dissembler. We have given that term, too, a bad meaning by our use of it, as with so many other Occult powers and their expression. *We* indulge in irony, we dissemble, for purely personal and selfish reasons—for our own sakes, not for the extrication of another from his mental and moral entanglements, nor for his enlightenment and education. Therefore we either take *literally* whatever the Teacher does or says—that is, at its human evaluation—or else, if we catch a glimpse that there is something Occult within his words or deeds, we are worse troubled and despondent than before lest the Teacher may have "misunderstood" or, after all, be "playing us false." It seldom occurs to us, when we find ourselves in Arjuna's dilemma, that possibly it is ourselves who misunderstand the Teacher as badly as we confess we have misunderstood life and duty—that the Teacher's difficulty may, in its way, be as great as our own. Hard as it is to learn, even from an accepted basis, it is infinitely harder to throw away an old basis and adopt and learn from a new one. Hard as it is to learn in any case, it is still more difficult to *teach*.

So Krishna tempts, or seems to tempt, Arjuna to re-arouse his fighting spirit by a direct appeal to Arjuna's old springs of energy

—his conceptions of "honor," "duty," his pride, his caste, his ideas of shame and ignominy, of possessions. As no response is recorded from Arjuna, we may well conclude these stimuli fail to stir him at all—that no personal motive can again ensnare or enslave him. Krishna probes deeper still: he discourses of the religion and science of the day—matters just as profoundly influential over the race mind then as now, and speaks of these "sacred" subjects with no respect for them at all. He shows that they are but creations of the "three qualities" of human nature, that there is nothing divine in them. He calls them mere "snares of delusion," metaphysical objects as worthless as the physical ones which Arjuna has renounced. This, too, fails to provoke a response from Arjuna. Through all this irony, however, runs the theme of the new basis, the note of action on it and from it, all couched in terms familiar to Arjuna's mind. This was to prepare Arjuna's intellect, his "heart" being dead within him. Yoga, contemplation, equalmindedness, unselfishness—*motiveless* action, from the human standpoint—all these and other terms are employed to picture to Arjuna that there is another path of action by which alone perfection can be reached.

The "impulse to 'Soul culture' " springs up at last in Arjuna and he asks for a "description" of such a Perfected Man.

There is no more perfect picture in the long gallery of human and divine portraiture with which the whole *Gita* is filled, than that afforded by this question of Arjuna's and by Krishna's reply which closes the second Chapter. It is the unconscious renaissance of the purely personal and human in Arjuna. He wants to know what a "Master" is like, and addresses his "communication" to the MASTER beside him in the chariot, wholly innocent of the irony of the situation! Krishna, as gravely, gives the desired "description." And then, opening the third Chapter, Arjuna thanks Krishna by telling him, "Thou, as it were with doubtful speech, confusest my reason!"

We may find in the story of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge, and that of the Arjunas who sought them, the repetition of the everliving *Gita's* opening chapters.

on the lookout

Work and Play

Much has been written about the dullness and meaninglessness of what passes for work in our society. Critics have pointed out that for this reason leisure has become primarily an escape from the frustration of work. Rolf Meyersohn examines changes in the relationship of leisure to work since the Industrial Revolution in the *Saturday Review/World* (May 4, 1974). He observes that, in the process of providing a life less filled with drudgery for themselves and their children, workers are obliged to translate whatever meaning may have existed in the idea of work into "attempts to make consumption meaningful." He continues:

> The dichotomy between work and leisure, at least for the working class, has lengthened the long arm of the job, of the leash. More extravagant and exotic vacations, holidays, and domestic amusements are available, but they remain distractions inasmuch as the real meaning remains withheld. . . . No matter how free the New Leisure may be for workers, it is always in the context of work. And when the context is gone, as in retirement, problems of boredom with work can be replaced by boredom with life.

The Buddhist View

E. F. Schumacher, in *Small Is Beautiful,* also suggests that human beings cannot separate themselves from meaningful work and remain whole. Leisure, then, is an aspect of meaningful work, not compensation or a substitute. In comparing orthodox Western economic practice with what he calls "Buddhist economics," he says:

> There is universal agreement that a fundamental source of wealth is human labour. Now, the modern economist has been brought up to consider "labour" or work as little more than a necessary evil. From the point of view of the employer, it is in any case simply an item of cost, to be reduced to a minimum if it cannot be eliminated altogether, say, by automation. From the point of view of the workman, it is a "disutility"; to work

is to make a sacrifice of one's leisure and comfort, and wages are a kind of compensation for the sacrifice. Hence the ideal from the point of view of the employer is to have output without employees, and the ideal from the point of view of the employee is to have income without employment.

The consequences of these attitudes both in theory and in practice are, of course, extremely far-reaching. If the ideal with regard to work is to get rid of it, every method that "reduces the work load" is a good thing. The most potent method, short of automation, is the so-called "division of labour" and the classical example is the pin factory eulogised in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Here it is not a matter of ordinary specialization, which mankind has practised from time immemorial, but of dividing up every complete process of production into minute parts, so that the final product can be produced at great speed without anyone having had to contribute more than a totally insignificant and, in most cases, unskilled movement of his limbs.

The Most from the Least

Another comment by Dr. Schumacher suggests how far we have gone in commercializing human needs and desires and making consumption an end in itself:

> [The modern economist] is used to measuring the "standard of living" by the amount of annual consumption, assuming all the time that a man who consumes more is "better off" than a man who consumes less. A Buddhist economist would consider this approach excessively irrational: since consumption is merely a means to human well-being, the aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption. Thus, if the purpose of clothing is a certain amount of temperature comfort and an attractive appearance, the task is to attain this purpose with the smallest possible effort, that is, with the smallest annual destruction of cloth and with the help of designs that involve the smallest possible input of toil. The less toil there is, the more time and strength is left for artistic creativity. It would be highly uneconomic, for instance, to go in for complicated tailoring, like the modern vest, when a much more beautiful effect can be achieved by the skilful draping of uncut material. It would be the height of folly to make material so that it should wear out quickly and the height of barbarity to make anything ugly, shabby or mean. What has just been said about clothing applies equally to all other human requirements. The ownership and the consumption of goods is a means to an end, and Buddhist economics is the systematic study of how to attain given ends with the minimum means.

Impact of Leakeys

It has before been suggested here that the chief benefit, Theosophically speaking, of the various anthropological discoveries by the Leakey family has been the shake-up of conventional theories resulting from the numerous specimens of ancient man unearthed by the late Louis Leakey, and by his son, Richard Leakey, in Africa. The net effect of these finds has been to push back hypothetical dates concerning the origin of the human species to at least three million years ago. This idea is eagerly picked up by journalists, who are attracted by any "controversial" development in the sciences, and given major emphasis in magazine and newspaper reports. After an address describing his most recent discoveries in Kenya and elsewhere, made by Richard Leakey earlier this year on the campus of Green River Community College, Auburn, Washington, a writer in the *Seattle Times* (April 23) declared:

> What it all means, of course, is that man has been around much longer than anthropologists have led us to believe and that he might have little, if anything, in common with apes in his ancestry after all.
>
> The Leakey finding shatters some of the most solid notions evolutionists have held about man. It has also shattered much of the "scientific" certainty surrounding theories of man's existence.

"The Greatest Shock"

The discovery to which this story refers is of some thirty fragments of a single skull found in a site on the eastern shore of Lake Rudolf in Kenya. A general article on the work of the Leakeys in *Newsweek* (July 15, 1974), remarks that this location "has yielded evidence of 107 separate hominids—more than the rest of the world's fossil sites have given up in the past 50 years." Speaking of the skull fragments unearthed by Richard Leakey's diggers in 1972, the *Newsweek* writer relates:

> As soon as he set eyes on them, Leakey says, he knew instantly "that they were the remains of a hominid different from any other known form of early man." This intuition proved remarkably accurate. When assembled by Leakey's wife, Meave, the skull turned out to have a cranial capacity of roughly 800 cubic centimeters—about equal to that of Homo erectus, and one-third larger than Louis Leakey's original Homo habilis;

it also lacked the beetle brows of Australopithecus specimens found in the same area. But the greatest shock came when the skull, given the catalog file number of 1470, was dated at almost 3 million years old.

First Ancestor Still "Apelike" and "Tree-Dwelling"

Earlier discoveries by the senior Leakeys, Louis and Mary, in Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge in 1959 and 1961 made them think they had happened on the true line of man's primitive evolution. The 1961 find, Homo habilis ("handy man"), had teeth the size of human teeth, a larger brain case than the 1959 skull, and "lacked the gorilla-like crest at the top of the head." However, Richard Leakey now believes that Homo habilis belonged to the extinct line of Australopithecus which coexisted, he says, with man's true ancestors. His choice for the lineal ancestor of modern man is represented by skull 1470—the forerunner of Homo erectus. The assumption is that over hundreds of thousands of years the brain size of Homo erectus "roughly doubled and his skull shape altered from apelike to the profile of Homo sapiens." These lines of descent (including others briefly mentioned by *Newsweek*), Leakey thinks, "derived from an original ancestor, an apelike and probably tree-dwelling creature named *Ramapithecus,* who lived perhaps 14 million years ago." When at Green River College, Richard Leakey spoke highly of the work of Carl Johanson, another anthropologist who believes he has found evidence of a "Broca's area" in the 1470 skull—the part of the brain governing speech.

No More "Elaborate Theories"

From the viewpoint of *The Secret Doctrine* teaching, there is little in all this to excite the student. Man is still considered as having a form of animal origin, derived from an ape or apelike creature; the Leakey theory does not include multiple points of origin, nor does it take cognizance of the anatomical studies of Frederick Wood Jones, who felt he had found evidence showing that early man was neither apelike nor lived in trees. Yet the simple conclusion that man appeared on the scene much earlier than previously believed has unquestionable value, opening the door to new thinking in various directions. Apparently, Leakey's find now has acceptance from most of his contemporaries in anthropology. One of them is quoted by *Newsweek* as saying: "Richard has found so

many specimens recently that he has devalued the currency, so to speak." It is no longer possible, he explained, "to build an elaborate theory on the basis of a couple of teeth and an armbone."

Agreement Won

The gradual conquest by the Leakeys of anthropological agreement is made evident by a *Newsweek* paragraph:

> [Louis] Leakey's bold interpretations sent the anthropological world into a tumult; now more finds by the Leakeys' son Richard and his colleagues have caused near apoplexy among many experts. Over the past eight years, the younger Leakey and other anthropologists digging in Kenya and Ethiopia have added one, perhaps two, branches to the human family tree. In the process, they have pushed man's emergence as a recognizably human being back another million years, and even cast doubt on the progression of the hominid line from Australopithecus to Homo sapiens. Earlier this year, at a contentious meeting arranged by the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York, a British anthropologist rose to remark: "At least every one in this room believes that Australopithecus gave rise to Homo." He was amazed to find himself shouted down.

Apes Descended from Man

Quite evidently, the ties with past thinking in modern anthropology are rapidly loosening. In the *Saturday Review/World* for last April 6, a brief review noted publication in Dublin of *The Darwinian Inversion* by Stefan Bronowicz. This book offers evidence, it is said, "that apes are an offshoot, and not the progenitors of the human race." The author, the reviewer explains, regards apes, monkeys, and baboons as mutants caused in the distant past by "a series of violent shocks, accompanied by a high level of radioactivity." A group of "New Anthropologists" in Britain is said to be giving Bronowicz' work "respectful attention," but the reviewer comments that his theories are not likely "to upset the prevailing views."

Genesis of Apes

The Theosophical account of the origin of the apes is considerably different from that of this writer, although they were, according to *The Secret Doctrine,* derived from man. In the second volume (p. 689), H.P.B. wrote:

The anatomical resemblance between Man and the higher Ape, so frequently cited by Darwinists as pointing to some former ancestor common to both, presents an interesting problem, the proper solution of which is to be sought for in the esoteric explanation of the genesis of the pithecoid stocks. We have given it as far as was useful, by stating that the bestiality of the primeval mindless races resulted in the production of huge man-like monsters—the offspring of human and animal parents. As time rolled on, and the still semi-astral forms consolidated into the physical, the descendants of these creatures were modified by external conditions, until the breed, dwindling in size, culminated in the lower apes of the Miocene period. With these the later Atlanteans renewed the sin of the "Mindless"—this time with full responsibility. The resultants of their crime were the species of apes now known as Anthropoid.

Weight of Preconception

H.P.B.'s general comment, which precedes the foregoing, applies directly to the confusion and speculation in modern ideas on the subject of man's origin and evolution:

The Darwinian anthropology is the incubus of the ethnologist, a sturdy child of modern Materialism, which has grown up and acquired increasing vigour, as the ineptitude of the theological legend of Man's "creation" became more and more apparent. It has thriven on account of the strange delusion that—as a scientist of repute puts it—"All hypotheses and theories with respect to the rise of man can be reduced to *two* (the Evolutionist and the Biblical exoteric account) . . . There is no other hypothesis conceivable. . . " ! ! The anthropology of the secret volumes is, however, the best possible answer to such a worthless contention.

Comment on Pseudoscience

An editorial by Philip H. Abelson in *Science* for June 21, 1974 begins:

During the last few years elements of the public and particularly of university students have increasingly turned to mysticism and to what I would call pseudoscience. The top sellers at campus bookstores have included such books as *Chariots of the Gods, Gods from Outer Space, Limbo of the Lost, The Secret Life of Plants,* and others like them.

The recent pseudoscience books are in part a form of science fiction, but they have characteristics that make them different. The readers of earlier works generally understood that they were scanning fictional material, but the new books seek to create the impression of scholarship and verity.

Further Objections

There is considerable justification for this complaint. It is true enough that in at least some of the books named by this writer there is an effort to give the impression of scientific authority where this is hardly justified, and the appeal to "the supernatural," to which he also objects, is frequently in evidence. The Theosophical student, who may see in certain of the references to the supernatural little more than recognition of the trans-physical, is likely to have other objections to such volumes. Most evident, for example, in *Chariots of the Gods,* is the materializing idea that influences or emissaries from other planets may reach our earth by physical means. This gross vulgarization of certain occult teachings seems especially misleading at a time when scientific skepticism is losing its influence in so many quarters, being too often replaced by no more than an eager and uncritical "will to believe." As Theosophical students know, the idea of the occult is distorted and corrupted by such careless popularizations, and their effect may be a brand of psychism as bad, in its way, as the Spiritualistic fantasies were in the nineteenth century.

A Failure of Science

It should be recognized, however, that this blurring of the lines of distinction between "acceptable science" and mere speculation or even superstition is inevitable during a time of intellectual and moral transition. When established institutions such as the sciences, and the universities which harbor them, lose their authority, the result is a wave of miscellaneous claims and prophecies to fill the vacuum. There is a law which asserts that a dark shadow follows every innovation, and the present journalistic exploitation of the mysterious and the occult, of which the modern world would know little except for the pioneering efforts of H. P. Blavatsky and her co-workers, brings full confirmation of this rule. It should also be pointed out that the extravagance of current "pseudoscience" is in part due to the failure of conventional science to give attention to super-physical and spiritual possibilities. If, for example, the psychic researchers of the nineteenth century had availed themselves of H.P.B.'s offer to put the library and

research facilities of the Theosophical Society at their disposal, many of the present misconceptions might have been avoided. But the London Society for Psychical Research preferred to allow the Hodgson report to stand for their position, thus closing the door on a mature and expanded view of the meaning of psychical phenomena. This left many of the persons unable to accept materialistic dogmas open to the appeals of the pseudo-occultist. Films like *The Exorcist* have been one consequence of ignoring the Theosophical teachings on occult psychology, and the present wave of pseudoscience with "mystical" overtones is another.

H.P.B.'s Example

Scientific writers who deplore these tendencies would do well to examine the works of H. P. Blavatsky, since they would then be better able to recognize the difference between charlatans and exploiters of the "occult" and a philosophical writer who was careful to distinguish between those of her statements which could be verified by conventional scholarship, and the teachings which she had acquired from her occult instructors. H.P.B. wrote as an educator; she did not seek "believers," but students who would recognize the high discipline involved in gaining genuine occult knowledge, and who would clearly distinguish between fuzzy-minded mystification and those subtle states of awareness which have been known to the philosophical mystics of all ages.

Can "Creativity" Be Taught?

In the same issue of *Science* (June 21), a staff writer reports on a conference on "Creativity" sponsored by a German pharmaceutical concern last May. Some twenty-one of "the world's more prominent scientists and philosophers of science" attended, but no novel conclusion was reached. The participants did agree, however, that the capacity to distinguish between an ordinary idea and a *good* idea is essential to creativity. On the question of how the creative faculty is developed, the consensus was that it flowered in the master-apprentice relationship. This, it may be recalled, was the opinion given by Michael Polanyi in *Personal Knowledge*. One participant repeated what he had learned from a teacher, to the effect that research is "the art of finding problems that can be solved." Creative research, in other words, is fruitful research. The eminent thinkers at the conference felt that "crea-

tive science" could not be taught in universities, and many of them ridiculed the idea of courses in "creative writing," on the ground that creativity in any subject is not possible to teach.

Criticism, not Creation

The comment of the reporter on this question is worth repeating:

> The title "creative writing," however, is actually a misnomer; most such courses are actually teaching criticism of creative writing. That is, the instructor begins the course with the assumption that the students have some writing ability, then teaches them how to distinguish good writing from bad writing, how to avoid making certain types of mistakes in writing, and how to avoid the banal and the trivial. The analogy to creative science is straightforward and, though the application of the concepts may be somewhat more difficult than is the case with creative writing, the benefits that might be derived from this type of education in science could be far greater.

Thus, the "act of creation" remains mysterious, as no doubt it should. And to have it clearly explained that most of the supposed teaching of "creativity" is no more than a training of the critical faculties seems a valuable contribution by the science writer. In her article on "Genius," H.P.B. calls this creative power "the direct light of the *Manasa putra,*" which may be mistaken for the fruit of intellectual training only for the reason that the higher ego, in order to give expression to its immeasurable powers, "still requires experience through its *personalities* of the things of earth, earthy on the objective plane, in order to apply the fruition of that abstract omniscience to them." For this reason, then, "the cultivation of certain aptitudes throughout a long series of past incarnations must finally culminate in some one life, in a blooming forth as *genius,* in one or another direction."

Ecological Ruin

A committee of 171 scientists of the National Academy of Sciences, commissioned by order of Congress, has completed a study of the damage done by our defoliation policy in Vietnam. The *Scientific American* (April, 1974) says: "Among the committee's conclusions are that serious long-term damage was done to Vietnamese forests, that the fertility of cropland was probably not adversely affected and that it is too soon to be sure whether or not humans were made sick or genetically damaged by the herbicides, or will be in the future." The long-term effects of the herbicides

are described:

> The ecological province most seriously affected by herbicides was the coastal and riverine mangrove forest, some 36 percent of which was subjected to spraying. One spray mission was usually enough to kill all mangrove trees; in extensive areas there has been no reconstitution of the vegetation because there are no sources of seed. The committee estimates that "it may take well over 100 years for the mangrove area to be reforested" unless a massive reforestation program is undertaken, which might reduce the time to about 20 years "if sufficient money and seed resources were available."

Haven of Pests

The article goes on to say that the mangrove forest serves as a spawning ground for many kinds of fish and water life. Now the dead forests have become instead the breeding ground of malaria-bearing mosquitos and hordes of rats, so that the destruction of these trees reaches into the lives of the people in many ways. Commenting on the committee's assessment of damage to the inland hardwood forest in terms of "merchantable timber," the editorial says: "The long-term question, which the report leaves unanswered, is to what extent the destruction of small or otherwise 'nonmerchantable' trees has so disturbed the forest succession that bamboo and scrub growth will replace valuable trees."

Reports of this kind suggest that the violence of present-day war dislocates and degrades the internal structures of the whole life of a nation. The destruction which results may prove in some ways to be beyond the powers of nature to repair, since the ordinary cycles of restoration have themselves been disrupted. Reparation for such violence becomes difficult to imagine. Recognition of responsibility is at least the first step in this direction. Beginning acts of restoration might then enlarge our awareness of what ought to be done, and also provide deeply felt restraint against the resort to war.

Chinese Traditional Medicine

A comment in *Scientific American* for last April to the effect that the practice of acupuncture is not new in the West shows how ideas are modified or even corrupted by prevailing prejudices. Referring to a report in a British medical journal, the *Scientific American* says:

The article cites a report by a medical officer of the East India Company who observed the use of acupuncture in Japan in the 1670's; application of the technique by a British surgeon, William Coley, in treating an infant in 1787, and the widespread practice of acupuncture in France and England in the 19th century.

The principal complaint for which acupuncture was prescribed early in the 19th century was distention caused by gas or body fluids. As the decades passed the procedure also came into use for relieving the pain of sciatica and muscle spasm. Exactly why it brought relief was not understood, although one practitioner in the 1870's suggested the circulation of blood in "impoverished tissues."

Survival in France

At the end of the 19th century the increasing use of acupuncture by quacks and the attribution of its benefits to such phenomena as the "conducive" needles' ability to draw off the "electric fluid" produced by "animal magnetism" caused British physicians to abandon the procedure. Only in France did a number of acupuncturists continue in practice. They do so to this day, largely because many of their patients are former residents of French territories in the Far East.

The current revival of interest in this ancient medical practice brings recognition of its efficacy in a wide variety of afflictions, from use in anesthesia to treatment of drug addiction (see Lookout, July, 1973). However, no explanation of the positive results of acupuncture has been found acceptable in Western medicine.